

Steelhead Monitoring Program in California: Past, Present and Into the Future

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Abstract: The establishment of accurate monitoring of steelhead population abundance and distribution within the State of California is a necessary component for restoration and recovery of the species under the Federal Endangered Species Act recovery plans and State management plans. The large, variable geographic distribution and significant population declines of steelhead throughout the state warranted the creation of a consistent, comprehensive monitoring program to statistically measure population abundance and trends necessary for effective fishery management on a statewide basis. The monitoring program divides California geographically into three areas based on species composition, abundances, and habitats: the Central Valley and Northern and Southern Coastal Areas. The monitoring plan is science based and statistically sound, with temporal and spatial variability to procure information on adult, juvenile, and smolt life history stages at the population and subpopulation levels for assessment of trends in each Distinct Population Segment (DPS). The data from monitoring sites is recorded into an evolving centralized database for archive and analysis, allowing quality control.

Statement of Relevance: Information gained from monitoring will be used to select restoration and recovery activities that will aid in the reestablishment of self-sustaining steelhead populations. The monitoring program was developed through a collaborative process to ensure that existing and future monitoring sites and data reporting are in compliance with the protocols presented in this plan.